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MFY's executive director spoke in favor of extending the 1961 act. MFY received funds under this act and the director reported the progress it had made.

One aspect of the project's attack on juvenile delinquency is the operation of a work-training program for potential dropouts. Work done by these groups proves the feasibility of the Neighborhood Youth Corps. A number of dropouts have been employed as teacher helpers for elementary grades. Work-study programs in the schools have aided in preventing dropouts and in encouraging the return of students who have dropped out.

Programs have been initiated which encourage the helped to become the helpers. More successful students are employed as tutors. Low-income, non-professional workers serve as visiting homemakers, work foremen, case aides, group leaders, or community organizers.

MFY works with youth recently released from institutions to help them adjust to community life. The program also includes research and other action programs. The program attempts to pull together all community resources in the interest of the delinquent rather than to employ the more conventional one-to-one method.

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STATEMENT ON S. 1566,
THE JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND YOUTH OFFENSES CONTROL ACT OF 1961
before the
EMPLOYMENT AND MANPOWER SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR
UNITED STATES SENATE

THE HONORABLE JOSEPH S. CLARK, CHAIRMAN

10 A.M. Thursday, April 8, 1965
by

BERTRAM M. BECK
Executive Director, Mobilization for Youth
New York, New York

- -

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today in support of the extension of S.1566, the Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Offenses Act of 1961.

Gentlemen, I am aware of the many demands upon our government to support worthwhile programs in a variety of fields. I do not envy you in making these difficult determinations. But I submit that there are some measures made compelling by their very nature, and others made crucial by the times. This act, I am convinced, meets both criteria. Has there been a lessening of the problem to which this act is addressed since its passage in 1961? Candor requires an answer that is both positive and negative. Let me explain.

Juvenile arrests have more than doubled in the last ten years, increasing 116%, according to statistics compiled

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by the United States Children's Bureau. It is also true, however, that the rate of increase seems to be coming under control as we compare it with the greater percentage of young people in the nation's population.

Moreover, it is a fact that the Economic Opportunity Act provides for the establishment of community action programs similar to that of Mobilization for Youth. However, this does not diminish the need for continuation of the work performed under the provisions of S.1566. Why? Because the poverty program is essentially one designed to provide service. The Mobilization program, and other demonstrations of a somewhat similar nature are basically crucibles for testing new knowledge.

Two years ago a Federal official told an audience in this city, "...we are not talking about a small, isolated problem. We are talking about a massive national problem which has its roots in such things as school dropouts, broken homes, racial discrimination, slum housing and youth unemployment." The situation has improved somewhat since March 12, 1963 when the then Attorney General, now a member of the United States Senate, made that statement. But it is still a problem of such proportions that varied efforts, with varying objectives and techniques are still required.

Obviously, there is no single answer to these complex questions; no approach which guarantees success. But, in the absence of a panacea, we are moving ahead; and there are some signs of beginning breakthroughs. I am here, today, for example, to report on the experiences of Mobilization for Youth, the first demonstration effort to receive funds under the Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Offenses Control Act.*

This brief progress report, covering the period from July 1, 1962 through April 1, 1965, will deal with school programs, work training and placement, welfare, correctional, health and recreational services--all designed to provide socially deprived youngsters with new opportunities for achievement.

One aspect of the project's comprehensive attack on juvenile delinquency, and its related problems, is the creation of new work-training opportunities. Among many efforts in this direction, MFY induced a leading oil firm to open a filling station for training purposes. Similarly, it has launched a needle trades training project with the cooperation of industry and labor. And it has served a dual purpose, contributing to community improvement and providing

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*See Appendix A for an outline of the theoretical basis and historical background of Mobilization for Youth.

job-training, as its work crews completed concrete landscaping at a City Housing Authority development, constructed bleachers for the City Parks Department, and rehabilitated a local community agency almost completely. Our work programs have demonstrated the feasibility of the Neighborhood Youth Corps now embodied in the poverty program. Continuing with experimental ventures, we are about to test a combined education-work experience. The latest such effort, in cooperation with the City's Board of Education, has witnessed the employment of a limited number of school dropouts as teacher-helpers in six of the area's schools. Following an orientation program, these boys and girls began assisting hard-pressed kindergarten teachers in the morning hours with the reading-readiness, science, music, art and physical fitness projects of small groups of pupils. In the afternoons they are involved with their own remedial work, with counseling and with preparations for the next day's activities. Like all 16 to 22 year-lds in MFY job-training programs, they are being paid $1 an hour for a 30-hour week.

The impact on the school drop-out of working in the educational system and the possibility of stimulating a return to school are elements of this project's potential.

The 1960 White House Conference recommended that "in designing preventive programs, organizations listen to suggestions and recommendations made by delinquents themselves." I doubt that many of the Conference participants could have anticipated the extent to which the helpers and the helped would enter into partnership in the years which followed.

Nor, I suspect, could they have anticipated the extent to which the helped would become helpers, for part of the effort to involve residents of "target areas" in the solutions of their own problems has been their employment to help one another. One of the most successful elements in Mobilization for Youth, for example, has been the use of more successful pupils in schools in its deprived neighborhood as tutors for less successful pupils. A measure of achievement is afforded by the fact that a carefully-devised research project, with control and experimental groups, has demonstrated that reading retardation in the most severely handicapped children can be halted if they are tutored twice a week. In other words, we have found a way to combat retardation that is both economical and effective.

In the same vein, MFY initiated the idea of employing local low-income workers--non-professionals, that is--to

bridge the gap in providing varied services. Visiting homemakers, who aid less fortunate neighbors, work foremen, case aides, group leaders, and community organizers are among these "role models." One result has been a growing appreciation, on a national scale, of the contribution to the helping process of persons who may not have degrees, but who qualify on the basis of native ability and a life-style which suits with the surroundings. This could well be applied as one method of combating the manpower crises in welfare.

Mobilization focuses many programs on the potential delinquent, in addition to job-training, education and community development. One example is the Adventure Corps, a physical-fitness, culture and recreation activity for youngsters 9 to 13 years old. Another is MFY's Young Adult Action Group, which some of you may remember from its visit to the nation's capital in support of the Youth Employment Bill. This program seeks to transform apathy and anger, which could lead to delinquent acts, into an interest in attacking the problems of employment, housing and racial discrimination.

We do not pretend to have found the answers to the increasingly serious problem of teen-age drug addiction.

However, we are pushing forward with a number of new experiments in this area. One of these, described at length in the March 27th issue of the New Yorker magazine, found a partial answer to the problem as members of a work-treatment group remained off drugs through four of the program's five phases--until they returned to their old environment. We are currently reviewing that program to see if we can learn from our failures to the end that the next effort will be more successful.

There are many other MFY programs but, I should like to mention just one more. What do we do about the youngster who has recently left a correctional institution? Anything? Very often the answer is no. Again, in this area, as in others, Mobilization for Youth is making a serious experimental effort.

MFY's "reintegration program" makes contact with adjudicated youths and their families at the point of commitment, if possible, and maintains contact for at least a year following release on parole. Dealing with youngsters 12 to 17 years old, this program is attempting to lower the rates of recidivism-currently 60 to 65 per cent, and it is testing the effectiveness of "direct intervention" which

provides access to resources necessary for conventional adjustment to society. Services to the youngsters are provided in school programs, job-training and others. Recently a group of mothers of committed children started explorations of their common problems. The response of this bi-racial, multi-lingual group has been enthusiastic. This program departs from standard practice in its attempt to pull together all community resources in the interest of the delinquent rather than employing the more conventional one-to-one helping method.

I have not touched upon one of the project's two major divisions--research--nor have I mentioned several important action programs, among them a Legal Services component that has aroused the interest of the American Bar Association. I think, however, you will agree that some of Mobilization's programs merit classification as "genuine social breakthrough." This is not intended to suggest, and I would like to underscore the point, that we at Mobilization see the project as a panacea for juvenile delinquency and youth crime.

Final judgments have not been made, Mr. Chairman. But the breadth and depth of our experience, the impact of Mobilization for Youth in its neighborhood, the receptivity

of young and old to efforts intended to help them improve their lives and their community--these and other preliminary developments lead me to recommend continuation of the mass of programs like Mobilization for experimental purposes for another few years. In the light of the new poverty program, we can see where the Federal juvenile delinquency effort can assume some new forms and directions.

As an important step toward this end, I respectively urge that this subcommittee support an extension of the Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Offenses Act of 1961.

This request is made with the full knowledge of the heavy financial burden carried by our government. I believe, however, that the potential of the programs being advanced under this Act calls forth a question which we must answer. Are investments in the behavioral sciences any less important than those in technological areas? I think not, and I hope you will agree with me.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, on behalf of the members of the Board of Directors and staff of Mobilization For Youth, thank you for giving me the opportunity to report on Mobilization For Youth and to discuss the serious national problem of juvenile delinquency and youth crime.

Appendix A

MOBILIZATION FOR YOUTH: THEORY AND DEVELOPMENT

Theory

The action elements of Mobilization for Youth--school programs and work training, services to groups of young people, to individuals and families--are derived from a theoretical perspective as to the causes, control and prevention of delinquency. Actually, there are a number of sophisticated points of view about this major social problem, each suggesting an approach to its solution. Each view has merit, and some of MFY's specific programs reflect their influence. However, the over-all Mobilization approach hinges on the belief that delinquency prevention can succeed only if efforts provide young people with genuine opportunities to behave differently--with the stress on creative education and useful work programs, and on the direct participation of local residents in programs to improve social and economic opportunities afforded to young people in their community.

The "opportunity theory," as it is popularly known, was developed by Drs. Lloyd E. Ohlin and Richard A. Cloward of Columbia University.* In effect a new battle plan in the fight against this major social problem--this theory has had a tremendous impact on the national concept of the delinquency problem. Its potential as a solution to the problem is considered most promising.

It is the Cloward-Ohlin thesis that young people living in slums do not have access to the ladders leading to social betterment. Social, economic, physical and cultural barriers are erected in the paths of children of the chronic poor, the theory suggests, as they race for life's material rewards. Such barriers induce these youngsters to turn to forbidden acts to achieve "successes" that cannot be gained through socially-approved means. If this thesis is correct, it follows that the best individual treatment of the delinquent--through clinics, the courts and institutions--cannot effectively stem the delinquency tide.

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*See Cloward, Richard A. and Ohlin, Lloyd E., Delinquency and Opportunity, The Free Press, Glencoe, Ill., 1960. See also, Mobilization for Youth: A Proposal for the Prevention and Control of Delinquency by Expanding Opportunities. New York, Dec. 9, 1961.

Development

Actually, Mobilization for Youth existed prior to the refinement of the opportunity theory, and prior to the passage of the Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Offenses Act of 1961. But the development project, as it operates today, would have been impossible without either of these vital influences.

Mobilization was conceived in 1957 and established as a non-profit voluntary organization one year later by some of the welfare, civic and religious agencies and institutions on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Their common concern was the sharp increase in juvenile offenses in the area--up 70% in a three-year period. In an attempt to devise a plan that could cope with this problem, they enlisted the support of the Research Center of the Columbia University School of Social Work.

As the founders explored possible approaches, it became clear that a planning period would be a necessary prerequisite to the launching of a soundly-based action-research demonstration project. Following the submission of such a proposal, the National Institute of Mental Health acted favorably on MFY's request for a two-year planning grant. Approval was based on the pilot project's potential in the expansion of knowledge in the social sciences. A planning grant of $412,667 was awarded for the period extending from December 1, 1959 to November 30, 1961.

Upon the passage of Federal legislation, action grants to Mobilization for Youth were announced by President Kennedy and Mayor Wagner at the White House on May 31, 1962. It is impossible to overstate the pivotal role of the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime during the project's planning period and since that time as MFY has engaged in social experimentation and investigation in an urban residential area with a high delinquency rate.